



## Public Notice: 2005 Legislative Changes in Dam Safety Inspection Fees

Water Resources Program

### For Owners of Dams Recently Built Under State Dam Safety Supervision

#### Background

In 2004, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) increased fees for plan review and construction inspections for new dams. For a number of years, Ecology's Dam Safety Office had experienced shortfalls in user fees from new dam construction. The fee increase was chosen by the Governor's budget office as an alternative to staff cuts. In addition to increasing existing fees, new annual fees were added to enhance the periodic inspection program for existing dams. Ecology held four public hearings, including a comment period, prior to adopting the funding changes.

In 2005, the state Legislature made some minor changes to the Dam Safety Office fees adopted in 2004. Lawmakers felt that dam owners who had borne the cost of an Ecology dam safety plan review and approval in the past 20 years were being charged too much for periodic inspections, particularly since their dams were relatively new and construction plans approved by Ecology. The Legislature amended RCW 90.03.470(7), the portion of the State Water Code that lists state fees for dam safety plan reviews and inspections.

The annual periodic inspection fees for high and significant hazard dams will be lowered if the dam is less than 20 years old. However, the dam plans must have been reviewed and approved by Ecology's Dam Safety Office for the reduction to take effect.

The specific changes are as follows:

(a) For dams less than ten years old, that the department examined and approved the construction plans and specifications as to its safety when required under RCW 90.03.350, there shall be no fee charged; or

(b) for any dam more than ten years old, but less than twenty years old, that the department examined and approved the construction plans and specifications as to its safety when required under RCW 90.03.350, the fee charged shall equal the fee for a significant hazard dam.

#### For more information

For more information, see Ecology's Dam Safety Web site at:

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html)

and click on "Dam Safety Office."

To leave a recorded message, call  
**1-800-468-0261.**

Ecology's Dam Safety Office contact in Olympia:

David Cummings, P.E.  
Department of Ecology Dam Safety Office  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600  
(360) 407-6620  
Email: [dcum461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:dcum461@ecy.wa.gov)

#### Expedited rule objections

Objections to Ecology's use of the expedited rulemaking process may be submitted in writing by **August 23** to:

Jerry Thielen  
Rules Coordinator  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

THIS RULE IS BEING PROPOSED UNDER AN EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS THAT WILL ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR THE AGENCY TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS, PREPARE A SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT, OR PROVIDE RESPONSES TO THE CRITERIA FOR A SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE RULE. IF YOU OBJECT TO THIS USE OF THE EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS, YOU MUST EXPRESS YOUR OBJECTIONS IN WRITING AND THEY MUST BE SENT TO JERRY THIELEN AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS AND RECEIVED **BY AUGUST 23, 2005.**